The Book Factory

By EDWARD ANTHONY.

IMPIOUS IMPRESSIONS.

12. Gertrude Atherton.

(As a Bewildered Roughneck Might View the Situation.)

"Inappetent" and "palimpsest"—
Oh, lady, give them words a rest.

Give 'em, I asks, a long vacation,
They fills me full of aggravation.

I ain't no educated guy—
What's more, I got no dough to buy

A dictionary for to see
Just what in hell their meanings be.

There's simpler ways of sayin' what
You mean, so can the highbrow rot.

I likes your stories, sure I do
(Although I often wishes you

Would drop society and all
And write about a firemen's ball;)

But I ain't like some clever birds
And I don't get them fancy words.

"Inappetent" and "palimpsest"—
Oh, lady, give them words a rest!

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If, on checking up at the end of the year, Albert Payson Terhune discovers that his well known collie kennels have set him back a few thousand he'll probably write another dog story—"Breed 'Em and Weep."

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"Find It in Books" is the new slogan of the publishers. But suppose you aren't looking for anything?

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THE ITALICS ARE OURS.

"'Man and Maid,' Elinor Glyn's new novel," reads an announcement, "is *rich* in human wisdom. . . . Note the attractive jacket in full color and *gold*."

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Our fame is spreading. A clerk in a typewriter supply store—(you should have seen us blush!)—tried to sell us a Blue Ribbon the other day.

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Speaking of which, we are at work on a "Song of the Typewriter"—in the shift key.

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FOLDEROL.

Said Thomas Beer to Thomas Seltzer,
"We ought to drink each other's healt', sir."
"I think that is a fine ideer,"
Said Thomas Seltzer to Thomas Beer.

"Seltzer' is a hard word to find rimes for, and it looked for a while as though we would have to content ourself with:

Said Thomas Beer to Thomas Seltzer,
"I hope you're making lots of *gelt*, sir."
"Business is slow this time of year,"
Said Thomas Seltzer to Thomas Beer.

• • •

"The lemons of the Pacific islands are more palatable than ours, according to Harold MacGrath, author of 'The Ragged Edge,'" reads a book note.

As for the lemons of Harold MacGrath, including "The Ragged Edge," they aren't palatable at all.

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It must have cost a million dollars, by the way, to supply the exclamation points for "The Ragged Edge." Conservatively estimated, the book contains 467,312,192 of 'em.

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TITULAR MOUTHFULS.

III.

If you are an employer, let
Me please suggest, sir, that you get
This tome and read it now and then:
W. D. Scott's *"Science and Common Sense in Working With Men."*

IV.

And now I'll name a little book
At which you ought to take a look
If you have anything on wheels:
Henley's *"Questions and Answers Relating to Automobiles."*

V.

If English be akin to what
You talk, a book you'll like a lot,
For it will keep your language pure,
Is F. H. Vizetelly's *"A Book of Idioms and Idiotisms in English Speech and Literature."*

VI.

If you would conquer in the strife
That people designate as Life,
You ought to read, *mon cher ami*,
A. G. Heath's *"Moral and Social Significance of the Conception of Personality."*

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"Rollicking, brilliant, gay, buoyant, debonair, vivacious, brisk, sportive, jolly, frolicsome, waggish," says the Chicago *Tribune* of Arnold Bennett's "Mr. Prohack."

That sounds to us like a verbose, redundant, pleonastic, prolix, loquacious, circumlocutory, expansive, dilatent, copious, protracted, long winded pronouncement.

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We have just finished reading "The Blue Circle," by Elizabeth Jordan, and this paragraph is to report that the author is a strong writer. At least a dozen times she threw us (and we weigh 170) into a state of suspense.

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A. Conan Doyle, the well known spiritualist, is a versatile, with the accent on the "verse," man. Few people realize that this busy explorer of the psychic realms has had time for other things, but the fact remains that he is the author of a book of poems—"Songs of Action." In one of the poems, "The Passing," Mr. Doyle's belief in spirits is manifest, as witness these stanzas:

It was the hour of dawn,
When the heart beats thin and small,
The window glimmered gray,
Framed in a shadow wall.

And in the cold sad light
Of the early morningtide,
The dear, dead girl came back
And stood by his bedside.

Any one can see at a glance that Mr. Doyle is easily as good a poet as he is a spiritist. And this, as one might say, is not so small praise.

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POETIC AVERSIONS.

1. *Edgerton Echo, the Mossbacked Modern.*

He *wisses, weens* and *trows* until
He *giveth* me a pain;
And when he calls his pen a *quill*
For slaying him I'm *fain*.

• • •

The movie version of "A Doll's House" was renamed "Her Great Desire," and we doubt not that when "Julius Cæsar" is filmed it will be called "Ambition's Price." And when the movie producers get around to "King Lear," our guess is that it will be billed as "Spurned by His Daughters; or, The Curse of Old Age."

And momentarily we expect an announcement to the effect that "If Winter Comes," which is now being filmed, will be rechristened "'She Wasn't the Woman for Mark."

Germany's Constitution

THE NEW GERMAN CONSTITUTION. By Rene Brunet. Alfred A. Knopf.

IN a dialectical sparring match at Genoa a few days ago one of the Russian delegates asserted that the Bolshevist revolution had helped the Allies to beat Germany, because it had stirred up revolution in the Kaiser's realm. (Incidentally, it tried its best to do the same thing within the allied countries.)

M. Brunet, who traces the rise of the forces of revolt against monarchy by way of introduction to a study of the new constitution which they produced in Germany, bears out to some extent the Bolshevists' claim that they aided in upsetting the German Empire in the autumn of 1918. Ernest Daumig, leader of the German Independent Socialists, had been to Moscow and had brought back with him Joffe and other agents of Russian Bolshevism to work on the minds of German workmen. The Independents and the Communists made the revolution, the Social Democrats (who now rule) gathered its fruits.

Of the class war that swept over every State in Germany with singular simultaneity the present constitution is the result. It bears the marks of the conflict also between the Communists and the Social Democrats, though the latter came through with the substance and the Left got hardly more than verbal recognition.

An American professor recently observed that the German Socialist (or Social Democrat) was very nearly the Continental equivalent of a standpat Republican. While this is in the nature of a hyperbole, it must be remembered that the Socialists there are decidedly moderates, not genuinely radicals—as the Communists discovered (if they didn't government mowed them down with machine guns in the streets of Berknow it before) when a Socialist lin.

The Constituent Assembly, elected according to M. Brunet by the most democratic suffrage ever known, was therefore moderate, since it was overwhelmingly dominated by the Social Democrats. And the constitution, while moderate in comparison with what the radicals demanded, is still what we in this country shou'd call very advanced. It is a mixture of parliamentary rule, direct democracy, with what just now appears to be a slight strain of Socialism and economic democracy.

The Cabinet is wholly responsible to the National Assembly (Reichstag)—a point that, it will be recalled, played a part in the pre-armistice demands of President Wilson upon the Chancellor, Prince Maximilian of Baden. There is the initiative and referendum, adopted in some of our States, but not for national voting as now in Germany. (If President and Reichstag disagree, or if Reichstag and State Parliaments clash, the issue is settled by a national referendum on the point.) The Economic Council with its subsidiary factory workers councils scattered throughout the industries, stands as a monument to the stubborn fight of the radicals for economic as well as political revolution; but the council can do no more than advise the Reichstag or introduce bills therein; it has no direct power in itself.

In that fateful autumn of 1918, when Germany's war hopes were ruined and the empire seemed to be crumbling, there was a stern demand that the dominion of Prussia over the lesser States be ended once and for all. This is reflected in the constitution. The present Reich (which M. Brunet translates "commonwealth") is viewed by some as still a federation of States, by others as a single unitary State. The national Government has virtually all legislative power, and in this sense the rule is more centralized than before the revolution. But there is no King of Prussia who is ex officio Emperor. Boundaries of the States may be altered with or without their consent, but the desires of the population to be transferred must be followed. This was designed as a wedge to split up Prussia; but Prussia contains four-sevenths of the population of the commonwealth and can, on important questions, still impose its will upon the other States.

Socialization of industries is provided for in the constitution. But, since the constitution may be changed at any time and the voters have the power to initiate laws as well as vote upon pending laws in case of deadlock, it would appear that they could socialize any trade they liked without special difficulty whether or not the constitution specifically mentioned that right. Americans, too, could socialize industries if they desired, though our Constitution is difficult to amend, while the German is easy to amend.

Single tax advocates will not be slow to note that the German constitution ordains that "an increase of the value of land arising without the application of labor or capital to the property (unearned increment, we call it) shall inure to the benefit of the community as a whole." Since here the word "shall" is used, this principle appears less optional than that of socialization.

The new constitution, when one considers that there was a violent revolution and a formidable group of Socialists who (unlike the Social Democrats) meant to put Socialism into effect at once, seems a thoroughly democratic one and not so very radical. It could hardly more effectively insure the rule of the people. It is indeed advanced, and has a mildly Socialistic tinge. But there was a good deal of Socialism in the German political system even under the Kaiser, and some was to be expected in the new order. Indeed, most observers in 1918 would have guessed that there would be far more of it than there is to-day.

M. Brunet has analyzed not only the constitution itself but the economic and social forces that overthrew the old regime and produced the new system—a thing necessary to the proper understanding of any constitution. The document is of course appended in English.

This study of the German State by a French scholar is clear and suggestive throughout. Any one desiring an insight into the post war social trend in the former empire will be well repaid for careful reading of it.

HAROLD CALLENDER.

A. S. M. Hutchinson, author of "If Winter Comes," has just cabled Little, Brown & Co., his American publishers, that the final chapters of his new novel are in the mail. It is to be called "This Freedom" and will be published in September. The title, like the ones chosen by Mr. Hutchinson for his previous novels, is decidedly puzzling, but is not a story about divorce. Mr. Hutchinson began "This Freedom" in March, 1920, very soon after completing "If Winter Comes," so that it represents more than two years of thought and labor on his part.

Wells on Wells

IN the course of "An Outline of Wells" Sidney Dark reprints Wells's own story of his early years, a little masterpiece of candor and direct writing:

I was born in that queer indefinite class that we call in England the middle class. I am not a bit aristocratic; I do not know any of my ancestors beyond my grandparents, and about them I do not know very much, because I am the youngest son of my father and mother, and their parents were all dead before I was born.

My mother was the daughter of an innkeeper at a place named Midhurst, who supplied post horses to the coaches before the railways came; my father was the son of the head gardener of Lord de Lisle at Penshurst Castle, in Kent. They had various changes of fortune and position; for most of his life my father kept a little shop in a suburb of London, and eked out his resources by playing a game called cricket, which is not only a pastime, but a show which people will pay to see, and which, therefore, affords a living for professional players. His shop was unsuccessful, and my mother, who had once been a lady's maid, became, when I was 12 years old, housekeeper in a large country house.

I, too, was destined to be a shopkeeper. I left school at 13 for that purpose. I was apprenticed first to be a chemist, and, that proving unsatisfactory, to a draper. But after a year or so it became evident to me that the facilities for higher education that were and still are constantly increasing in England offered me better chances in life than a shop and comparative illiteracy could do, and so I struggled for and got various grants and scholarships that enabled me to study and take a degree in science and some mediocre honors in the new and now great and growing University of London.

After I had graduated I taught biology for two or three years and then became a journalist, partly because it is a more remunerative profession in England than teaching, but partly also because I had always taken the keenest interest in writing English. Some little kink in my mind had always made the writing of prose very interesting to me.

I began first to write literary articles, criticisms, and so forth, and presently short imaginative stories in which I made use of the teeming suggestions of modern science. There is a considerable demand for this sort of fiction in Great Britain and America, and my first book, "The Time Machine," published in 1895, attracted considerable attention, and with two of its successors, "The War of the Worlds" and "The Invisible Man," gave me a sufficient popularity to devote myself exclusively, and with a certain sense of security, to purely literary work.

II.

Then there is Mr. Wells's famous declaration of the subjects with which a novelist may rightly deal:

We are going to write, subject to our own limitations, about the whole of human life. We are going to deal with political questions and social questions. We cannot present people unless we have this free hand, this unrestricted field. What is the good of telling stories about people's lives if one may not deal freely with the religious beliefs and organizations that have controlled or failed to control them?

What is the good of pretending to write about love and the loyalties and treacheries and quarrels of men and women if one must not glance at those varieties of physical temperament and organic quality, those deeply passionate needs and distresses from which half the storms of human life are brewed? We are going to write about it all. We are going to write about business and finance and politics and precedents and pretentiousness and decorum and indecorum until a thousand pretenses and ten thousand impostors shrivel in the cold clear air of our elucidations.

H. G. Wells.

AN OUTLINE OF WELLS. By Sidney Dark. G. P. Putnam's Sons.